TAPE NO. 15

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NARRATOR Dorothy Swanson for Grace Lyons Davison

INTERVIEWER

PLACE

Founding
~~History~~ of Ballard

DATE April 1, 1951

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THE FOUNDING OF BALLARD by Grace Lyons Davison
Words spoken by Dorothy Swanson

In the early days when the Santa Ynez Valley was new, as far as white settlers were concerned a lot of land in the Ballard Valley drained by Alamo Pintado Creek, was free for the taking. A wide strip between the San Carlos de Jonata Rancho and Canada de Los Pinos, Zaca Rancho and the Mission Lands was government land. A young man, George W. Lewis, born in New York State moved with his family to Illnois . He later sought adventure in the Far West. He was a civil engineer by profession. If one studies the history books one will discover that one of his forfathers signed the Declaration of Independence. He came to this valley in 1856. Remained for a year of two and then went to Mexico where he had interests. During his absence he left his valley land in the care of William N. Ballard, owner of the stageline through the valley connecting San Francisco with Yuma, Arizona. It was a long trip between San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara with no inbetween stops so Ballard acquired land adjacent to Lewis's and built a stage station which housed a Wells Fargo office. The buildings made of adobe were made by Mexican labor under Ballard's direction, were completed by 1860, and in 1866-7. The lower building which had a dirt floor until wood was put down in 1865, was Ballard's home when he was in the valley. In 1866 Ballard became ill and uas unable to cope with ranch and other demands so he sent for Charles LaSalle (Lazallier) of San Bernardino, who took over the duties of stage manager. It was during LaSalle's time that the upper adobe was built. LaSalle's daughter Joy LaSalle Dryfess was the first child of American parents to be born here. That was in 1867. Ballard did not recover from his illness and his last wish was to marry the girl to whom he was engaged, Cynthia Lundsford. He died shortly after the wedding ceremony. His widow inherited his valley holdings and shortly after Lewis returned from Mexico Mrs. Ballard married him. Their only child Mildred Lewis was born in the adobe home. Families began to move into the area and the need for a school house was realized. A subscription school was held in the adobe no longer needed for a stage station, because of time table factors. There were 8 to 10 pupils with a

Miss boyce, sister of Jack Boyce of Santa Barbara as teacher. In the meantime Lewis planned to establish a home for himself and his family on another portion of the ranch. Here he built an adobe and frame house and an adobe barn. Noe that he had settled down he wanted greater advantages for his family. He laid out a town site to which he gave the name of Ballard for his former friend. He gave land for a church and school. The wide streets were given American names, Cynthia Street for his wife. Ballard had the first public school in the valley, the first blacksmith shop, post office and protestant church(Methodist) and saloon. The saloon lasted a short 6 months and the building was used as the school until the school was completed in 1883. The first public school was held in the Lewis Granery. Mrs. Marills Marshall of San Marcos Pass was the first teacher. Pupils from Santa Ynez and Los Olivos areas were attending this school until their districts built their own. Miss Edna Minor taught school when it was in the saloon building. Here Sunday School was held on the sabboth, men,women and children filled the place. A.F. Hubbard, the village blacksmith, lead the singing and all the bearded men and bonnetted women joined in. The song that made the most lasting impression on this writer was "Somewhere there is a Lord of Beauty." When the new school was built church was conducted there. Both Methodists and Presbyterians held their services there. The Amen corner resounded with vervant amens and the enthusiastic Methodist minister could be heard a block away with his pleading and denuncations. The schoolhouse was also the scene of weddings, socials, funerals, and other entertainents. A debating society held forth on such subjects a "Which is more dangerous, Fire or Water." The most exciting one was based on Frank R. Stockton's "The Lady and the Tiger." There the Farmers Alliance met and the Good Templors held sway. The Ancient Order of the United Workman held its lodge meetings there. Oyster suppers, ice cream socials were a part of the early day joys and so was dancing. All the valley centered at the school house.
T here was something in the quiet place that brought cultered people to summer here. An entertainment of unusually high class was not uncommon. Shakespearean plays, The Mikado, and operettas were staged and speakers of note brought new ideas to the valley.

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Ballard is still a quiet little village and content to be so. With the same one room school house built 68 years ago and continuous use but now with telephone and electric lights.

Describing the Thompson and West illustration of Ballard in their 1883 book: Picture of Ballard in 1881 shows at the left the home of G.W. Lewis, his adobe, barn and granery where the first public school was held. The store, built by Henry Watkins still stands on the original cormer but has been made into a dwelling. Next to it is the saloon and the house in back of it was built by J.A. Kenny of Santa Barbara. The fenced-in house and stable belonged to the Stewart Family, Jim Stewart was helper to the blacksmith A.J. Hubbard. It was bought by Judge Sam Lyons in 1884. The school house is misplaced and should have been shown west of the barn. The bottom picture is the first post office in the valley in 1880.

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